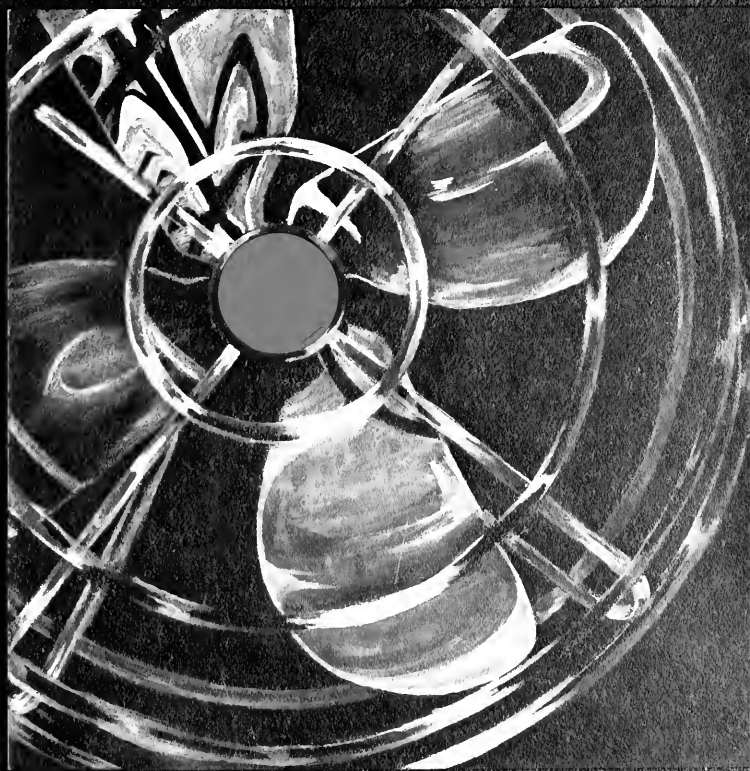


Quad



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Quad

Fall 1989

Birmingham-Southern College
900 Arkadelphia Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35254

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Policy

Quad magazine is printed once a semester and is funded by the Student Government Association. Birmingham-Southern College students may submit as many works as they choose. Works are then numbered, judged and selected anonymously by the *Quad* staff. All artwork is returned to the artists. Submissions to *Quad* should be sent to box A-46. Art may be given to Mary Gover in Hanson 161. We ask for a cover letter with your name, title(s) of your work(s), phone number and box number. The editors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for spelling, punctuation, grammar and clarity. Artists and authors represented in this issue reserve all rights to their works. Views represented in *Quad* are of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the staff, adviser, or school administration.

Colophon

This edition was typeset on an IBM computer system in conjunction with a Hewlett Packard Laser Printer Series II. Aldus Pagemaker (v. 1.0 and 3.0) was used in computer layout. Times Roman font in point sizes ranging from 12 point to 24 point was used. The cover stock is Mead offset enamel 80 lb. gloss, and the text is printed on Mead offset enamel 80 lb. with Kohl and Madden ink. Printing was done by EBSCO Media of Birmingham, Alabama: 2200 copies of 48 pages plus cover. All typesetting, layout and pasteup were done by the *Quad* staff.

Editor's Note

Although this issue of *Quad* is larger than previous issues, it cannot contain all the good work submitted. But I believe this issue represents diverse arts at Birmingham-Southern College.

I thank the staff members for their time, dedication and enthusiasm. I thank Dr. Sprayberry for her encouragement and support. I thank all the students who submitted their work for consideration.

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Heat Lightning

On Highway 36 the signs said Men At Work
but not at this hour
and though I couldn't hear the thunder
for the roar of my tires on waffled pavement
heat lightning followed the shadow of my left elbow
through four counties
and into my dreams

Your Chicago is more than a million worlds away
from this ragged two-lane Alabama road
of blue 1972 pick-up trucks
and freshly mown hayfields
and tricycles overturned beneath magnolias
but at 80 miles an hour
distance is easily forgotten

Tomorrow you will go home to your city streets
and theaters and apartment buildings
someday I will follow
but now I sit on my front steps, my chin on my knees
sated for the only time I can remember
ever
watching our lightning
the wind blows my hair across my face
washing the scent of your dried-in salt to my toes again
mauve skies curl warm around me

-- Heather Dunn

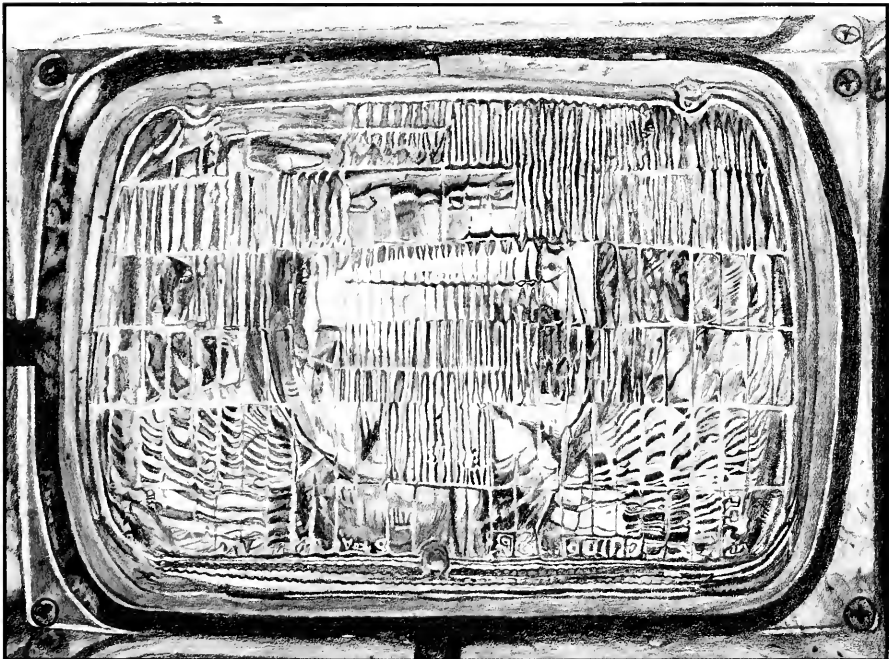
sewer steam broke over the windshield
he didn't seem to notice
that the city breathed
and that every red light (he ran)
was (yet) another rule broken

when I was a child
 he said
I spun around
 and around
in circles
swinging airplanes on strings
somehow
it seems as though I was always
 spinning

now he runs (red lights)

-- Heather Dunn

Alice Hsu, *Headlight*
Graphite on Illustration
Board 20" x 15"



Where's Daddy?

by Rhonda Richards

"Where's Daddy?" I asked as I wandered about the rooms of the house. I don't remember how I was answered, but I was to learn years later that the situation was called "divorce." It was not a traumatic situation for me. For the time being, I only noticed one change: Daddy wasn't there at night.

I remember Mother reading to me often when I was little. I would slip into a world of imagination where anything could happen. Books took on a whole new meaning to me, because for that one moment, the rest of the world was suspended in time and things could happen the way you wanted them to.

That was the one thing about Glen...

If Mother was busy doing housework, I read to my stuffed animals. They were alive then. They listened intently to my stories and obviously enjoyed them, because they always smiled back at me. When they couldn't go to sleep at night, I would have to think of a short bedtime story to tell them. I tried to include them as characters, as I whispered to them tales of adventures that took place in the backyard. Even though the yard was neatly mowed, I could always envision it as a jungle, a mountaintop, or a desert. . .

whichever setting suited my needs.

Afterwards I would say goodnight to each one as I lay in the dark, running a mental image of how they were arranged on my shelves, careful not to leave out anybody. My favorites slept in bed with me, and they got an extra kiss on the nose.

Each week day I looked forward to the afternoons, when my brother Glen got home from track practice at high school. He came in as I sat on the couch in the den watching "Sergeant Jack" on television, and headed for the refrigerator. He would gulp down half the milk in the carton, then come in the den, change channels to "Hogan's Heroes," stretch himself lengthwise on the couch, and prop his feet in my lap. He smelled of sweat and red dirt. I complained to Mother about his changing channels in the middle of my show, and she worked out an agreement between us that we would alternate our programs daily. Glen always cheated and watched his show anyway, but he promised to make up for it later.

That was the one thing about Glen: you could always depend on him to keep his word. In return for sacrificing my television right, Glen provided me with entertainment that no television could match. He had an elaborate racecar track

that ran under his bed, across the floor and over the stereo. Even though he had to help me operate the controls sometimes, we raced our cars against each other.

Afterwards, he would do his homework while I listened to his stereo. A speaker sat on each side of the room, and when I wasn't watching him he would turn the balance knob from left to right, making the music bounce from one speaker to another. I asked him in amazement what caused that, and he claimed to have magical powers. I, of course, believed him.

Helping Glen work on his car was the most fun. He drove a new Javelin, metallic blue with mag wheels and an impressive stereo. He was proud of that car. We followed the same routine at each repair session. He would be on his back under the car and would ask for a tool. I would ask him what it looked like. After listening to a brief description, I would select a tool and say "This one?" I was seldom correct on the first guess, in which case I would pick up tools at random one by one, saying, "This one?" until I finally selected the right one. When we finished the job, he would usually give me a ride so we could test the results.

Nighttime was a secure time. All of my animal friends watched over me from their perches on my shelves. They

wouldn't let anything get me. Then there was the added warmth of Glen's jerseys that I sometimes used for night-gowns. A star athlete in both grammar school and high school, he had plenty of basketball and track shirts. They all had at least one stain that would never wash out, but that just personalized them as Glen's. His old sweatshirts were especially warm in the winter. I don't think the divorce occurred in the winter.

...you could always depend on him to keep his word.

Mother, suddenly faced with the fact that she had two children to provide for, had to go to work for the first time. She placed me in a nursery down the street that was operated by an old lady, with the help of her family and neighbors. It was certainly the most impressive house on the street with its meticulously landscaped lawn, but it lacked the kind of warmth that Glen's sweatshirts had.

I was to stay in the nursery in the morning and afternoon until Glen could pick me up after track. After kissing Mother goodbye, I turned and saw nothing but a roomful of noisy children. "Mommy," I whimpered. . .but when I turned around she wasn't there. She had already gone.

I decided I didn't want to be in the nursery. There were just too many strange people. I went by the window and noticed that I

had an excellent view of the coming and going of cars. If I stared out that window long enough, I rationalized, my brother's car would drive up soon. But what if he forgot he was supposed to pick me up? I got scared and cried all day.

Poor Mrs. Pierce, who operated the nursery, tried to involve me in projects to get my mind off crying. She took me in a room where children sat at a table, printing the alphabet with crayons on lined paper. I did it once just to make her happy, but as soon as I finished I returned to my post. I did not want anything to do with the other children. I remember one particular boy wore a patch over his eye. He was evil-looking. I thought there must have been something wrong with all of them, and I was scared of them.

Soon a lady announced it was bath time. I was confused. I always took a bath at night in my home. I had never bathed at someone else's house. Nonetheless, both boys and girls had to strip and stand in line to be bathed. Six children were allowed in the bathtub at one time. I didn't like it one bit.

Then came nap time. I was insulted. I was four years old. I didn't need a nap. I was put in a bedroom upstairs by myself because I cried so much, and I could come down as soon as I woke up. But I wasn't tired. I never took naps. So I sat by the window and cried even more. Would Glen ever get here? There was no clock in the room, so I couldn't judge whether

enough time had passed to fool them into thinking I had slept and waken up. I was scared to go downstairs. After what seemed forever, a worker came in my room and said, "Aren't you ready to come downstairs?" I nodded and wiped my tears, having been rescued.

I returned to my original post, and surely enough, Glen drove up. I was wild with joy and relief. As soon as that door opened I was holding onto his knees so tight he couldn't walk. He picked me up and carried me to the Javelin. I buried my face in his shoulder, refusing to wave goodbye to mean Mrs. Pierce.

That night, almost hysterical with tears, I told my Mother of all the scary things that had happened to me. Especially the part about having to bathe with BOYS. "But darling," she asked, "How did you know they were boys?" I answered matter-of-factly, "Because they had on boys' sneakers!"

When Mother realized that I wasn't improving as the days wore on, she decided it was time for a conference with Mrs. Pierce. Mother told her that she gave me a bath every night, so there was no need to bathe me in the nursery. She also told her that I didn't take naps and that I would probably be a lot happier and easier to deal with if she just let me go about my own business.

It would seem that my problems were solved, but they weren't. I was happy to sit by the window all day until Glen came

(continued)

for me. But Mrs. Pierce kept insisting that I play with the other children. I didn't want to. She picked me up and set me in her lap. I didn't like for anyone but my family to touch me. She told me that she loved me, and a few of the children wandered up and said that they loved me too. I was embarrassed and I wandered down. As I squirmed to get out of her lap, she slapped me hard on the leg and scolded me. I was horrified! It was the first time I had been spanked. I guess Mother always thought I was too fragile to spank, and that these were difficult enough times anyway. Besides, I never did anything mischievous in the first place. So I promptly screamed like I was being killed and burst into tears. She put me down in disgust and stormed away. I decided that Glen ought to beat her up, so I went to the window to wait for him.

It broke Mother's heart to see me so upset every day. Only recently she told me that whenever she left me crying at the nursery, she would cry all the way to work.

I was experiencing feelings of emptiness and aloneness for the first time. Each day I became more and more introverted. After a month I was so withdrawn I seemed like another child. So Mother freed me

from the nursery and took me to a friend's house who agreed to watch me all day.

I was much happier there. I had known Mrs. Goodwin, my mother's friend, for a long time. Mother prepared me a sack lunch of my favorite foods, and I ate picnic lunches in her backyard with one of my stuffed animals. I could even curl up in any corner and read my library books. I was enjoying my mornings again.

But nights were never the same. The nursery had taught me a new emotion: fear. It wasn't good enough for my animals to watch me from the shelves. Every night I had to have at least fifteen of them surrounding me on my bed. Even in the summer, I could not sleep unless I was well-hidden under my covers. Glen's shirts offered some comfort, but he was a whole room away. If anything scary should happen, I would have to face it by myself until he or Mother had time to get there.

The days of stability were gone. *Q*

Rhonda Richards is a senior English/history major.

Onward

It's one of those
soft, swollen days.
Early, and the rain's
been falling.
And it has stormed
so hard, and
Torn up things.

And as trees
lay fallen,
And homes sit,
bashed apart,
Everything is
scattered about,
And I look up.

There, reaching high
into the clouds:
A vast bouquet
of colors,
Starting
from the ground.

-- Michael Witcher



Mark Berte, *Perspective*
Photograph, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Excerpts from "Journal of a Psychotic American"

Alan Hughes Pearson

"Notes from a Bathroom Wall"

Upon considering the implications of inspiration which an author derives while in my present position, I am led to doubt the nature of authors en masse. Perhaps my philosophical, religious and societal treatises composed in these stately quarters are drawn, not from the intellect, but rather from a baser form of reality.

Who has not felt the compulsion, in this situation, to take pen or pencil in hand and inscribe upon these walls a message to future generations? Wherein does the urge to write originate? Surely we will temper our conclusions with reason. However, my inspiration has depleted with the completion of my appointed task. I rise in the hopes of renewing my thought as my inspiration collects for tomorrow.

Alan Hughes Pearson is an Adult Studies student.

Over the Wall

Three times three times ten
the future is past and past has no end.
Backward we look before we begin
making our escape
over the wall.

The wind blows fair and I soon must fly
to realms unknown
dreams of air visions of sky.

Are these new lands I cross, striding free
above fire and water
or worlds, lost, waiting for me?

If you journey into freedom's flight
winged in soul, body and mind,
make a plea for child's delight
leave the present behind.

Ten times ten times three
the present is past and past is free.
Forward we go, behind we see
Others await their chance

to fly...

Withdrawal

When I rest my forehead
against the cool breast of my keyboard
the letters spill out onto the screen
as my eyes clench against
the numbing contact.

Amoeba-like figures swim
across my eyelids.
Dark, shadow-like creatures
surrounded by golden light.
Moving,
ever moving to the right.
They never reach it
but they always move to the right.

The drugs are all gone.
I couldn't afford them anyway
but the waiting is so painful.
God,
it's excruciating.

...they are so innocent,
virgin cloaked with reassuring smiles
that cut like the rasp of fine paper
through the skin of your fingers.

no pain, anguish: precision made...

The water is all around me and my eyes tear and burn from the
acid. Hands reach for me but I don't remember how to breathe.
My throat chokes and rattles for air but there is none.
Arms encircle my chest and squeeze, tighter and tighter...

maybe tomorrow will be better.

The Flaming Forest

Now. . .

Outside, the leaves are flaming.
The torrents of wind only inspire a more rapid fluttering
of this spectacle.
The sun burns high above, pouring out its rays to
heighten the grandeur of the flaming forest.
The watery expanse of sky stretches earthward until it
meets the flame of the leaves,
And in the barrier between forest and sky, fire and
water, white vapor collects and spews forth as
clouds, dew, rain, and fog.

Later. . .

The flame has long since died away.
Gone is the gleam, the brilliance, the vibrance, the
power it brought to the forest.
Its smoke, its steam still covers the sky.
This haze blocks out the sun--the warmth, the brilliance.
The world is cold now.
The forest is a mangle of gnarled branches arising from a
brown blanket that once was the flame.
The ashes of the fire will soon begin to settle and cover
everything in sight with a blanket of white.

-- Judd Harbin

Laocoön

not of cool watery marble
somewhere beside a stained-glass window
--the glaze and curve of frozen serpents
and elongated limbs, a hidden light,
celestial-blue,
shining on pure white straining necks and fingers
and into the clear blue grottoes of their open mouths
down into their deepest stony depths, deeply violet,
tears trickling endlessly
upon their pallid faces
like subterranean waters
winding in womblike darkness,
all of one and struggling,
intertwined for all eternity

but of flesh and bone and blood
and spirit. like the marble i am become
a baroque fantastic miscreation
of nature, a writhing monstrous thing
striving among itself.
i stand up, i say yes, it is done,
i do not have to go back again,
i believe i am free.
but then the serpent whispers in my ear
-this door has never been open before.-
my mouth opens in pain and horror
as he slips around my neck, it feels
just like the arm of a lover
and i fall to my knees knowing
if the door stays open
and i find myself close enough
i know

-- Kim Witcher

Food for Thought

by Carole Coulter

The Mistake

Forever trapped
A moment in time and space
It's inescapable
It's the way things must be
It's unchanging
And unattainable
It comes only once
And then is gone
And yet
It remains for all eternity.

-- Mary Gover

I looked up at the grey sky wondering how so many birds could fit into such a small place. My dad was about a yard away and yelled for me to stop goofing off and get to work. Work is an understatement--it was more like torture. Walking through a field of grass that I could barely see over, Dad and I were trying to find quail or whatever type of bird it is you hunt. Dad had never shot anything in all of his forty-five years, so I didn't expect today to be any different.

We must have walked for ten minutes, but it seemed like ten hours. I was growing impatient, but I knew that Dad wanted to show me that he was a good hunter. So I kept my mouth shut, hoping that this would all be over soon. I was hungry, and all I could think about was the nearest McDonalds.

Anyway, Dad and I decided to stand or sit (which was my preference) and wait for my dog to flush out the birds. Before I got comfortable, Dad started yelling something that sounded like, "Birds! Birds! Look!" I gazed over at a bush to see a covey of quail flying as fast as they could toward the sky. I remember thinking that this had to be one of the most exciting days of my life--almost as fun as cleaning up my room. But my dad was excited, and I couldn't

spoil the moment.

What I heard next was not the peaceful sound of birds flying off into the distance, nor was it Dad's cursing; instead it was more like a clap of thunder followed by a joyous cry of triumph. My dad actually hit something--a bird. The minutes seemed to drag by as my dog found the bird. I was horrified when Dad shoved the half dead creature into his coat pocket. It was to keep the dog from getting

I couldn't spoil the moment.

to it, my dad said as my mouth hung open in disbelief.

The walk back to the car was a silent one except for the gurgling sounds of happiness my dad made. Suddenly, those sounds turned to sobs. My dad was crying.

I guess that day I saw him as a human for the first time in my life. Q

Carole Coulter is from Birmingham and is a senior English major with a business minor.

jacqueline

where are you now
woman without a face
who moves like a mobile
of the moon
changing

you were a part of my name
and when i silenced you
you ran from me
Veiled woman in a filmy white gown
green glass beads and ivy
twisted in your dark gold hair
shy and
Natural
you took a cradle full of memories
in your fragile arms
i can't remember some things any more

whose ceiling was it
that glittered in the darkness with
silver moons and stars
and who were the magic people
that fell to earth and the wind
creatures we spoke to
in the secret wood
and where is my old friend
and what is the shape the color the movement
of her singing eyes
she was only a child

you are like a nymph, i see you
rising out of an oval of water
shining like a bluegreen fish
i see you're only half a woman
the milky flesh of your soft hip
glides to scales of jade
we believed in mermaids once
and still i believe in you.

-- Kim Witcher

Crumbling Stone

The trees do not mind;
Theirs is the last laugh.

"The best laid plans of
Mice and men."

"Lay them down," say the trees.
"We will uproot *them*."

Eventually, all stone is lost
Before the roots.

Man comes;
Man destroys;
Man creates the environment.

"Let us plant a tree beside the stone,"
He says, in his guilt.

The trees do not mind;
Theirs is the last laugh.

-- Troy Wesley Dickerson

Chris Atkins
Photograph, 7¹/₄" x 9¹/₂"



Grandmother
 freshstarchsterile from the hospital
barely able to stand
 yet on the brink of eternity
frail as the crumby cake she used to bake
 (i worshipped in awe
 lest it should fall)

Now
 taking "one step forward and ten back"
she consults with death or her friends on the phone
 concerning tomorrow's weather
which she might or might not live to see

-- Holland Hopson

The Walk In the Rain

Countless are occasions that
taunt my weary mind.
I find myself
cringing away from thoughts
that embellish my
instinctual needs.
To what expense must I
cast myself out
into a storm
of upheaval?
Rains beat down,
pitter-patting
on my head.
Puddles disperse
underneath the weight of my feet,
as waters seep through
the cracks in their souls.
My heart beats fast.
I gasp for breath.
My thoughts focus
on the ones I hold dear, and
while shadows play games,
calling for me
to play,
I sink into my own darkness,
falling
further and
further
through chasms
that occupy the empty space
within
my breast.

-- Stephen Hanson

Hot-Shot

by John Tracy Howell

George rode into the parking lot with a flurry of dust, then parked the motorcycle against the curb. Taking off his helmet, he ran a hand through his long red hair--straightening it as best he could--leaned back against the sissy bar and watched as the sun slowly set on the dust-covered horizon.

"Yep," he said to himself with a sigh, "today's as good as any other to find out if all that practice will ever pay off and if Dad's cue is really as good as he said it was."

He placed his helmet on the rear-view mirror of the bike then leaned forward and threw his leg back and over the seat. George unstrapped a small case from the back of the seat and tucked it under his arm. He brushed dust off of his jacket as he walked toward the front door of Jake's Pool Emporium.

The small Texas pool hall looked like every other pool hall in any sleepy town across the country. Grey and dingy paneling lined the walls full of holes where nails once held pictures, certificates, and other paraphernalia that are kept in cheap picture frames to give a place atmosphere. Gaudy neon signs lined the windows too thick with grease to see through. Naked light bulbs dangled over well-worn ten-foot pool tables and the smell of chalk and greasy food struggled against

the smoke of cigarettes and God-awful cigars.

George entered the dim room and stood listening to the sound of ivory hitting ivory, the murmured oaths of losers, and the general laughter of those associated with the winners. He moved back into the shadows of the nearest corner and stood listening, watching, and studying his prey. The center table seemed to be the one to beat.

A tall cowboy ran the table with ease, and polished off the eight-ball with a three-cushion bank shot. Three or four people of questionable reputation stood watching the whole affair. Money changed hands in defiance to a sign above the door which proclaimed: "No Betting." The Texan stood chalking his cue stick as the balls were racked again and more sidebets were whispered. The air smelled stale from spilt beer.

A good defense is a good offense. . .

George felt eyes boring into him and looked around for their source. He met with the gaze of a huge mountain of flesh. Cold grey eyes stared out from three hundred pounds of fat-covered muscle in a six-foot frame. A large stogie moved from side to side inside a mouth surrounded by two-day-old beard. The eyes never wavered from George's face and the ci-

gar seemed to pick up speed as the big man stared. George began to feel nervous and decided that a good defense is a good offense. He left the security of the dark corner and walked toward the steel-eyed giant.

"Hi," he said with a smile, "looks like he's run into a streak of good luck." George motioned to the tall Texan at the center table.

"Not luck," came the reply, "just old-fashioned skill." Those eyes still held their gaze. "Don't I know you from someplace?" the huge man asked. "New York, or maybe it was New Orleans?" he continued.

"Not me," George answered, "I've never been to either one." George swallowed hard and returned the large man's stare.

"Guess I'm mistaken then." The giant removed the cigar as if making a point before continuing. "Yep, old John there is one of the best pocket billiards players I've ever seen and I've seen plenty," the large man said before returning the cigar to his tobacco-stained teeth.

"Yeah," George agreed, "He's good, but I've seen better."

"Do tell," said the huge man, "and where might that be?" He shot George another of those stinging glances.

(continued)

"Oh...around," George answered. He felt his hands begin to sweat and a lump grew in his throat. "Tell me," he said quickly trying to change the subject, "how much a game?"

"Five bucks minimum," said the man, "but he'll probably play for whatever you want."

George thanked the fat man and strolled toward the table, trying not to appear too anxious nor too reluctant.

He pulled five one-dollar bills from his pocket and placed them on the edge of the table. The Texan looked up, eyed the young redhead, and motioned for him to take his cue stick from its case.

George placed the small black case on the edge of the table and put the custom-made pool stick together. It was made from domestic rock maple with a butt fashioned from Brazilian rosewood. The tip was of a special buckhorn, made from the antlers of an East Indian deer. George hefted its 57 inches and 18 ounces like an expert swordsman and proceeded to take aim on the white cue ball. The ball shot from the head to the foot of the table then returned to rest against the head end rail. George made a glance at the big cowboy.

The tall Texan showed no emotion at all as he chalked his cue. "Nice lag, son," he drawled before taking aim on the respocted cue ball. Again, the ball propelled down the length of the table, but this time fell short of its mark by an inch.

George placed the white ball on the mark at the head of the table before turning to his opponent.

"By the way," he asked, "what's the game?"

"Straight eight-ball's fine with me," the tall man replied.

"How about four-out-of-seven games?" George asked.

The cowboy nodded his agreement and George took aim on the cue ball in the center of the table as the Texan racked the remaining balls at the other end. As soon as the rack was removed, George hit the white ball with a thundering crack. It streaked down the felted slate and struck the triangle of balls at the foot of the table. Four of the balls found homes in the pockets of the table: two solids and two stripes. Murmurs of approval arose from the mouths of the patrons, some of whom moved from their chairs for a better look.

"Show me a shot I can't make!"

George continued to place balls into pockets with the cue ball, taking the smaller numbers as his own, with an intense concentration that belied his age. Soon, the eight-ball was gone and the game was over. A crowd developed around the table to watch the young kid beat one of their own.

At the end of the fourth game, the huge Texan handed over twenty-five dollars to the young redheaded pool player. George left the money where it lay and chalked the end of his

pool stick. The tall cowboy took a hundred dollar bill from his pocket and popped it loudly before placing it next to the twenty-five.

"A hundred says that you can't do that again," he drawled with a smile, "but let's add a little risk to the whole thing." He placed his big ten-gallon hat in the middle of the table. Laughter pervaded the smoke filled room.

George smiled and then proceeded to bank his break shot off the right side rail of the table. A hush fell over the crowd as two balls went into pockets and the young pool player worked his way around the obstacle. After polishing off the eight-ball, he stood confidently chalking his stick and uttered his father's famous war cry, something George had grown up hearing. "Show me a shot I can't make!" he said to the crowd in general.

What followed was one of the most astounding displays of billiard wizardry ever seen in the state of Texas. It seemed that no one could come up with a trick shot that the redheaded kid couldn't make. His custom-made pool stick danced in his hand. Money lined the rails of the table. Soon, he had to stuff it into the pockets of his jacket in order to rest the cue stick on the rails to shoot. He went through all of the shots that had made his father famous before he died; caroms, banks, billiards, throw shots, combinations, "the machine gun" and all the rest.

"O.K., kid, I'll show you a

shot that you can't make," said a deep voice. The fat man slowly walked out of the shadows with a puff of cigar smoke and placed two five-hundred dollar bills on the edge of the table. "I've only seen one man ever make the shot and it took him three tries to do it," he continued.

"Do I get three tries too?" asked George.

"Sure, why not?" replied the huge man as his cigar shifted to accommodate a smile.

"O.K., show me!" George smiled back.

everyone began to talk at once...

The fat man waddled up to the table, placed two balls close together, and inserted a big silver dollar on edge between them. "Let's see you knock the dollar against the end rail and back between the two balls," demanded the huge man.

"Now there's a trick if ever I saw one," replied George, stalling for time. Laughter rippled through the room. George prayed to himself and to the only thing that his father had left him, the custom-made pool stick. Sweat beaded on his forehead as he attempted something he knew was impossible. The coin sped down the table after being hit by the cue ball and rebounded in a crazy arc, missing the two target balls by three feet. A hush fell over the table then suddenly everyone began to talk at once.

On his next try, he leveled the cue and reduced the forward

thrust; the silver dollar hit the rail and rebounded into one of the balls. George replaced the ball and the coin and smiled confidently. The pool hall became instantly quiet.

On the third try, George sent the coin into the rail and back, stopping the coin exactly where it had started from--resting between the two balls.

The crowded pool hall of Texans erupted into a bedlam of acclaim. George had his hand shaken and his back slapped by almost everyone. As the excitement died down, George picked up the two bills and scanned the room for the fat man. No one knew where he had gone. The tall Texan said that he thought that he had seen him leave through the front door, but he wasn't sure.

George said his good-byes, took apart the pool stick still in his hand and headed for the parking lot as the pool hall reverted back to what it had been before the arrival of the young, redheaded kid.

It was late and the moon was full and high in the sky. The stars were out and George breathed in the thick night air. He strapped the pool cue, now in its case, to the back of the bike and threw his leg over the seat. Just as he reached for his helmet, he heard the fat man's familiar voice.

"You're Charlie Peterson's kid, aren't you?" demanded the voice from around the cigar.

"Yes sir," George responded, suddenly feeling very young. "But, how on earth did

you know that?"

"I knew the minute I laid eyes on you and that stick," he replied as he pointed to the bundle on the back of the bike. "It just took me a little while to figure out where I'd seen your face before," he continued. "I seen your old man give an exhibition once during the war. Ain't never seen nothing like him." He cupped his hands around the cigar and relit it before continuing. "Your pop was the only man I ever seen that could do that trick with the coin," he said puffing lightly. "I must a tried it a thousands times myself, but never came close." The fat man sighed. His body still shook as he spoke. "He'd a been mighty proud of you tonight, son." After taking another puff on the stogie, he added, "what you gonna do with all that money?"

George tensed, frightened at first, then relaxed as the moonlight showed the expression on the face of the big man.

"I'm going to use it as tuition for a college in New England," George replied.

The fat man's body shook as he laughed. "Yep, mighty proud indeed. Now I don't feel so bad about losing!"

George started the bike, put on his helmet and pulled out of the parking lot with a wave in the fat man's direction as he headed northeast to the Interstate. *Q*

Tracy Howell is a senior psychology major.

Ben

by Kim Witcher

September Frost

Waking up, running to the window,
Not even noticing the cold floor
Under my bare feet.
To look outside, I must scrub
At the window
To clear a place to see
Through the frosty panes.
The trees
Are covered with beauty
And ice.
The ground is buried
Under a thin coat of wonder.
The sun glistens off the white
Crystals of magic.
There but for a moment,
Then melting away to reveal
A warm fall day.

-- Amorak Huey

the child playing in the sand and rocks at the shoreline begins to get cold about now, hearing the distant rumble of thunder, seeing the pale green waves (crystal like the water in puppet fairy tale books, swirling like the walls of the red sea when it parted) whooshing toward his crumbly knees. he isn't scared. he would rather be an animal in the storm, in the midst of the storm, fair hair plastered to his sunburned forehead, sailing his plastic blue boat along rivulets that turn to oceans in the soft brown sand, his bones shining golden like wands in the downpour, than to go inside where all is dark and warm and dry. instead of the bluish peaceful glaze of rocks and rain beneath a silver sky (somewhere must be the sun, birds with gilded wings that dip gracefully into the dripping iridescent clouds) inside is morning fireglow, antique lamps with pale-red shades, tables made of dark rich wood. Mother and Father in great chairs reading letters, a rich red persian rug on the floor and he thinks, here i find i see farther inside of me. the sound of rain spattering and roaring wild is more musical than any classical piece. he hums a tune from *peter and the wolf*. an occasional boat glides by, the rain is so soft on his face. Like a caress but without the sweet clinging fragrance of mother's white hand on his blond hair, the smell of a goddess' in a classical frieze. he is afraid the white light above the forest is the storm going away, then laughs to hear the thunder clamor all around him.

Q

Kim Witcher is a sophomore English major with a Spanish minor. She is interested in 20th century Spanish and Latin American literature.



Dawn Haskew
Oil, 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ "



Collin Asmus, *Hero Exposed on a Mountain*
Graphite on Rives, 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 30"

Collin Asmus, *Treehouse*
Wood and Clay, 23" x 10" x 10"



The Shooting

by Clint Ragsdale

It is dark, but not silent. Through the blackness I hear the rattle and clatter of automatic weapon fire, punctuated by the sharp cracks of a sniper's rifle. A faint roar becomes audible and quickly rises in volume. It drowns out the gunfire. A helicopter hovers invisible in the dark sky, the roar of its engine revealing its presence.

I see the chopper spit out a rocket which marks its course with a firebreak. The streak disappears into the trees. A brilliant flash and loud rumble announce the detonation of the rocket. The flash fades to a dim red glow and the sounds of gunfire, masked by the night hunting chopper's noise, return as it moves away.

A breeze sweeps over me in the chopper's wake. I smell exotic fragrances of jungle fruits and flowers. The breeze mixes the jungle smells with the pungent odor of gunsmoke and charred vegetation.

I feel tired. My arms ache. My legs ache. I want to stop, but I can't. I keep walking. I keep carrying him.

The rocket's explosion has left a clearing in the jungle. A small fire burns on one side. Impenetrable shadows encroach on the firelight from the clearing's edges. I step from the shadows into the firelight. I take another step, stumble, and fall, dropping him.

For a moment we both lie still, as if dead. Then I stir. I raise myself on my elbows and crawl to his side. I reach out and grasp his wrist. Nothing. I turn my face away, toward the fire. My mind travels far away, through high school corridors and little league baseball games with the man whose body lies beside me.

The crack of a rifle jerks me rudely out of my grief. A bullet hits the ground, raising a puff of dust at my feet. My mind sets my body in motion. I throw myself to the ground and begin to roll. I roll over once and grab my rifle from the ground where I had dropped it. I roll over again and reach the vegetation at the clearing's edge as two more bullets miss me by inches. Sitting up, I put the rifle to my

My finger caresses the trigger's cool steel...

shoulder and brace myself against a tree. I put my eye to my weapon's low-light scope and begin methodically scanning the clearing.

The scope reveals my attackers. There are two crouched in a tree on the clearing's opposite side. My finger caresses the trigger's cool steel, and convulses, pulling the trigger back. The rifle spits a half dozen bullets, and before I let off the trigger, a

scream begins. One of my opponents falls from the tree, out of sight. I hear a soft thump, and the scream ends.

The remaining attacker fires desperately into the jungle and I duck. The firing stops. I hear another thump. I put my eye back to the scope and guess that my opponent has jumped from the tree. I scan the area around the clearing with the scope, but find no evidence of my attackers.

I begin to scramble furiously around the clearing's edge, toward the tree my opponents had been in. I am nearing the tree's trunk when I come to a five foot embankment. Looking down, I see my attackers below. One lies on the ground, his head cradled in the other's arms.

I bring my rifle up, curl my finger around the trigger, and hear the sobbing of my uninjured foe.

I drop my rifle to the ground, and creep quietly away into the darkness. *Q*

Clint Ragsdale is a junior English major from Opelika, Alabama.

Loneliness

I stand here
In darkness.
It envelops my senses and
Caresses my spine.
Mystery intrigues me as
The darkness is my disguise.

I am one with the darkness;
It is my friend.
Together
We
Are
Lonely.

Its coldness I can feel
As the moon hovers
Over
The city with
A
Cunning smile.

The night
Is
Cold.

-- Stephen Hanson

Night Meeting

The kitchen window
magnifies the heavens
as we sit at the table,
musing about stars, love, and music
and how they are intertwined.
I touch you reluctantly
and wish things could be different.
As you leave me with a soft kiss,
I smoke, wondering why I must
be tortured with a soul that
longs for but cannot be made happy by
love, and weep as the stars you love so much
mock me with their wishes of happiness.

-- Gina Armstrong

saxophone sighs

my cigarette ash
glows
 drops to the floor
forgotten
 my hair in my eyes
the drum calls insistent
 demanding
he mouths
something
to the soundman
and I study the lipstick stain
 on the rim
 of my empty glass

you could almost hear it
 breathe
a match flares
someone coughs

and in the smoke too thick for moonlight
I close my eyes

-- Heather Dunn

William Nicrosi
Photograph, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Excerpt from *Slice of the South*

by Elaine Anthony

Awaiting her eminent doom, Sally Jane methodically proceeded to nibble each beautifully curved fingernail into the quick. Her duet partner, Betsy Martin, kneaded a sugary, purple piece of gum until her tongue was magenta and her jaws ached worse than the night with Bobby

Peters at the double feature. Confident of her performance, a young prodigy rested her cheek against the cool paneling and caught up on much needed sleep. Over by the refreshment table a novice drummed "Elephant Walk" on the crisp linen. The inner doors to the void beyond

opened ominously, Miss Walker revealed behind them. "Sally," she whispered. Making the sign of the cross, Sally Jane resigned herself to her fate and prayed for the recital to be over. *Q*

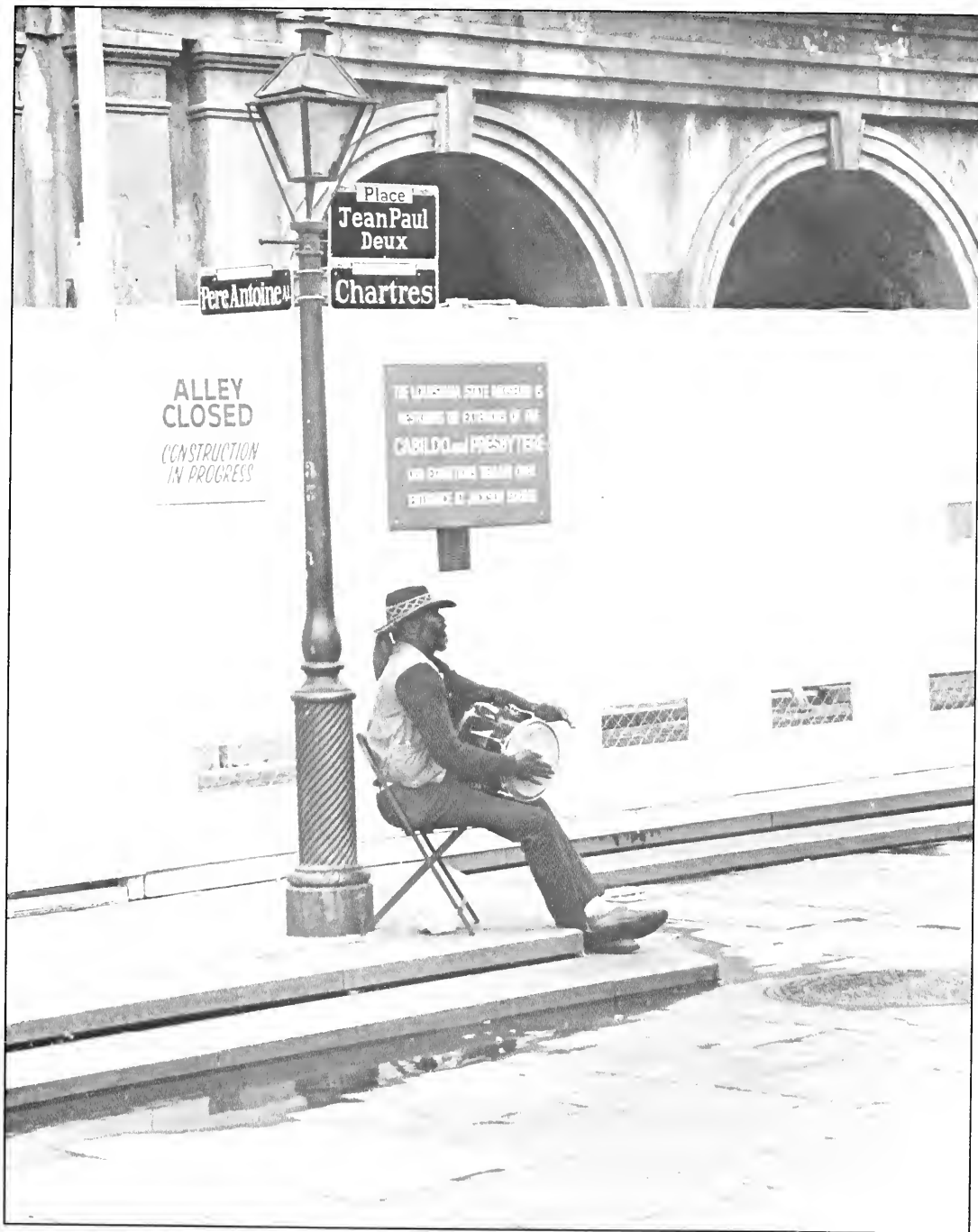
Elaine Anthony is a junior English major from Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

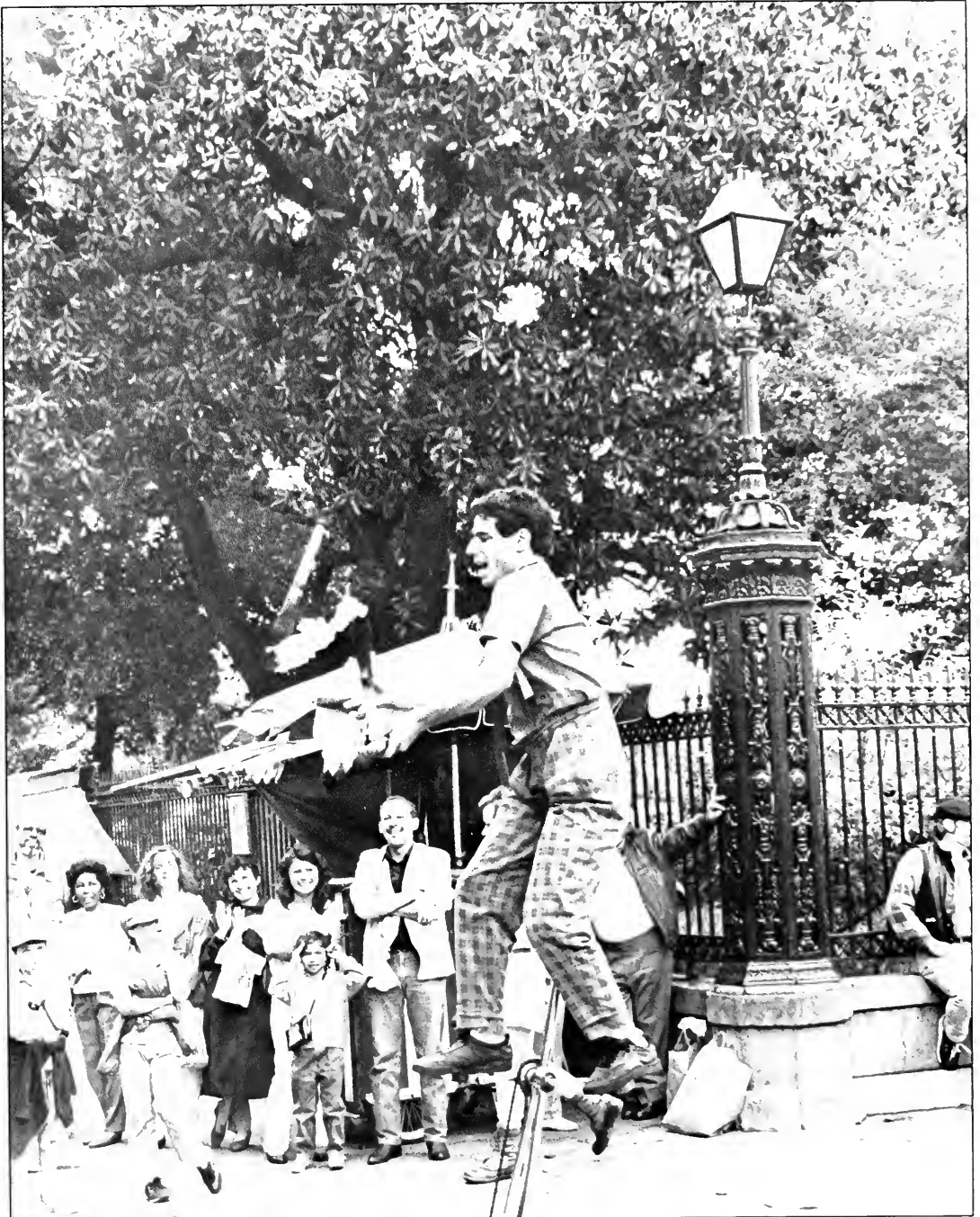




William Nicrosi
 Photograph, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x $7\frac{1}{2}$ "

William Nicrosi
 Photograph, $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x $9\frac{1}{2}$ "





The Grand Old Flag

by Richmond West

The marching band rounded the bend, their bright crimson uniforms shining in the sun and their ivory plumes, atop tall red hats, fluttering in the wind. The band was a traditional one with most of its members playing either flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone.

But there were also players of rarer instruments: saxophone, piccolo, baritone, and bassoon.

And there was a lone tuba player--considered by some an outcast, though he rather thought of himself as the backbone of the entire group. The percussion section appeared at the end of the procession. The baton twirlers threw their silver sticks into the wind and the flag corps saluted with their red and white flags. The drum major whistled and raised her hands, and the band members raised their instruments to their lips. The honor guard in front raised Old Glory, and the tune "Stars and Stripes Forever" blared from the marching band to the crowd, galvanizing all into a frenzy.

The crowd rose from the benches with a burst--they cheered, clapped their hands, and whistled. Many waved their hands excitedly, gesticulating wildly for the Grand Old Flag. And indeed she was glorious! But amidst this uproar,

one portly old man, with a sparse head of gray hair and thick glasses, seemed to stubbornly sit right where he was. His name was Mr. Grate. Mr. Grate did not cheer or whistle--he did not even move. He kept his face in a stony scowl, resembling a cold statue wearing a white button-down shirt and maroon suspenders.

A young and fervent blond-haired woman on the front row, Mrs. Freebourne, turned her head back briefly to scan the excited crowd. Her azure dress fluttered in the breeze and her smile sparkled. Soon, however, her pale blue eyes fell on Mr. Grate's stiff neck and her smile evaporated. She stared at him for a moment in disbelief. The band continued to play, but her eyes remained fixed on the old man. Mr. Grate noticed her from the corner of his eye.

She turned to her husband

The crowd rose from the benches with a burst. . .

and commented in a low voice: "How can that man behind us be so adamant? He won't even stand up for the flag." Her husband, with his thin brown hair waving in the wind, twitched his thick mustache as he turned to look at Mr. Grate. He quickly turned back to face the band. This caught the attention of Mr. Grate, who turned his hard face

(continued)

William Nicrosi
Photograph, 7¹/₂" x 9¹/₂"

Grate, who turned his hard face toward the couple and strained his ears.

Mrs. Freebourne continued: "Doesn't he love his country and the freedom it represents? He's acting like a communist pig. He's a disgrace to our country."

Her husband replied: "He must be some ungrateful jerk. He's probably the guy who stood up in the town meeting and said he supported the Supreme Court on the flag burning issue."

Doesn't he love his country?

Though their voices were low, Mr. Grate heard them. He turned his cold eyes on the band as Mr. and Mrs. Freebourne looked toward him again. When Mr. Grate suddenly turned his eyes and glared menacingly at the couple, they quickly turned their heads back to the parade.

The young woman's scowl now matched that of Mr. Grate. She said nothing further, however, and the crowd soon began to disperse after the band passed by. Mr. Freebourne nudged his wife away from the bench. She glanced quickly at Mr. Grate, who grimly ignored her as he sat in a stern countenance. She averted her eyes and the couple left in great haste. Mr. Grate sat there still, his lips locked in an interminable frown.

This venerable gentleman stayed on that bench until dusk

began to creep along the gray street. The crowd had long abandoned the sidewalks--it was extremely desolate. The abandoned blue streamers, the small red flags, and the dirt from everyone's shoes swirled along the ground in the whistling wind.

He at first did not notice the attractive young woman who ambled up the street, her blond curly hair waving in the wind. She suddenly appeared before him in her navy blue dress.

"Hello, Daddy. I'm sorry I couldn't pick you up sooner. Did you have a good time?"

Her father remained tacit as she pulled his wheelchair next to him and gently lifted him up and into the seat. She noticed that there was a tear in her father's eye.

"Why are you crying, Daddy? You always have loved events like this. Why didn't you wear your Purple Heart?" She hugged him warmly and then pushed him toward home.

After they left, the only thing left moving in the drab street was the mix of streamers, flags, and dust stirred by the breeze. *Q*

Richmond West is a junior history major from Gadsden, Alabama. He states, "I often struggle with creating meaning from life. . . will I have expressed true meaning?"



Will Davis, *The Opera Singer*
Clay, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8" x $4\frac{1}{2}$ "

You laughed
because I said, "I'm scared"
and left me
where I'd stopped
on the dotted yellow line
(thinking since I'd said it you too would stop)
instead
I watched you
or rather your back
and the toss of your head
but only heard the laughter
after the wind carried it
all the way back
to strike my face.

Even at that distance
you looked very large.
I felt foolish for being afraid.

-- Kate Sheehan

The Woman Who Never Was

From whence she came
I
was not
familiar.
Her eyes were
reflective
like
emeralds
in a sun-filled misty
jungle.
Her tears were
flowing
like a river
after
a hard
rain.
She was lost
on a
long,
barren,
dreary road
that had no name.
And in the distance,
amongst
the darkness,
I
heard her
scream.

A
desperate
cry,
like one
from
a dying rabbit,
rang
in
my ears.
She was standing
there,
afraid of
what she could not see,
bound
by shackles
of cold
steel.
Her soul
was frozen
by the
coldness
of the night.
And her wounded
heart
bled
like a
slaughtered
prey.

-- Stephen Hanson

The Softball Game

by Amorak Huey

Everyone cheers when Aunt Audrey gets on base.

It's the third week in June, and my family is having its annual summer get-together. Right now most of us are engaged in a softball game. You know, the kind that isn't organized, but just kind of happens. This one started because two of my cousins started playing catch. Uncle Bill decided to show them how to throw a curve. Then some of the other kids went to watch, and eventually someone brought a bat. Now there are about twenty-five people on the field, which is actually Grandpa's back yard.

Everyone is talking and laughing and generally having a good time, except maybe the twins, who are arguing about the score. No one else really cares what the score is, or even who's on what team.

Out in left field, one of the older boys is sitting down with his girlfriend, and two or three little kids keep running by mak-

ing kissing noises. Almost everyone else is trying to talk Grandma into batting, even though she insists she just came out to watch. She finally submits, although she adamantly refuses to run bases. Immediately, one of the grandchildren volunteers to run for her. Uncle Bill is pitching, and he takes a dramatic wind-up and lobs the

The couple is still out in left field. . .

ball to her. She takes a powerful cut and knocks the ball about ten feet. Everyone applauds, even though her pinch runner is thrown out at first. She laughs at her girlishness, and sits down in a lawn chair beside Aunt Laura, who has also retired from the game.

The game wears on, and people come and go. One of the twins turns an unassisted quadruple play, something he'll brag about for the rest of the week.

The sun is starting to set, and most of the older people have gone to start dinner. The only ones left are the grandchildren and quite a few uncles who are trying to prove something about their athletic abilities. The couple is still out in left field, now free from the harassment of the children, who left them alone after being threatened with bodily harm by the boy.

Finally, the call to wash up for supper comes, and everyone deserts the field in groups of three or four. The children resume their torture of the couple, who are holding hands as they walk slowly toward the house. The sun is almost completely down now, and the game is over, put on hold until next June. *Q*

Anorak Huey is a sophomore English major with a political science minor from Trussville, Alabama.

The Mission

Heat rises from the earth
going through to the soles of my feet.
The sun beams down upon my head.
My body is covered with a layer of sweat.
Silence.
My muscles clench.
Bang!
My body springs forward.
Footsteps clamor around me...
A gulf of wind surrounds my body...
Footsteps get closer.
Sounds of a distant audience arrives at my ears.
I lean...
the tape crosses my chest.
A roar breaks out among the silence.
My body relaxes.
Mission accomplished.

-- Irma Persons

Shadowwarrior

by Clint Ragsdale

The shadow was both a mystery and a threat. Cigol watched it for some time, trying to find out what it really was. The path he followed led from the bright sunlight of the plains into a dark, shadowy forest. Next to the path, within the shadows, stood a shape. At first Cigol thought the shape was a tall, powerfully built man, somewhat larger than himself. When the shadow did not challenge him, or even move, Cigol decided it might be an optical illusion, caused by the overlapping forest shadows, but he couldn't be sure.

His uncertainty reminded him of something his master had taught him.

"Knowledge is a powerful weapon, but like a double edged sword, it cuts both ways. Anyone with a part of knowledge you do not possess can defeat you."

"But how can one be assured of victory, Master?" Cigol questioned.

"No man is ever triumphant over all, Cigol. Even knowledge is not all-powerful. Nor is teaching, for there are some things that cannot be taught, only learned. This is why you must leave here to find what you seek."

So Cigol left the comfortable surroundings of his master's castle and journeyed into the wild. He looked like any

traveller on the road. Only strong arms and quick, flashing eyes distinguished him. He wore tough, slick leather with a buckler on his left arm and his broadsword on his left hip. The few travellers he met hinted that he might find what he sought at the end of the path he now travelled. The path brought him to the forest's edge and to the shadow. He considered entering the forest at another point and trying to find his path from there, but he realized he might well become lost in the darkness.

The shadow was both a mystery and a threat. . .

Seeing now way to complete his journey without going through the forest, he started down the path, toward the shadow. Nothing happened until he stepped out of the sunlight and into the shade. Then, without warning, the shadow drew a longsword from its sheath and brandished it, challenging him. Cigol backed up, into the sunlight. The shadow did not react. Cigol tightened the straps of his shield around his forearm and unsheathed his own weapon. Sunlight blazed on Cigol's blade like a forge's flames. Seeing the shadow wore no shield or armor, he challenged it. "Stand aside. I must follow the path to complete

my quest."

Instantly the shadow replied, "No." The single syllable rolled across the plains behind Cigol like a thunderbolt. "Very well. Defend thyself." Cigol stepped into the shadows and his sword ceased glittering. Cigol feinted at the shadow's head and struck low, with the precise movements of a practiced master, but the shadow parried easily, and their blades rang on each other. Cigol half-stepped to the left, feinted, and struck again, feeling out his opponent's defenses. The shadow, wielding its blade two-handed, countered. Metal rang a second time. The shadow moved so swiftly, gracefully, and silently that Cigol thought he must be fighting a phantom or wraith.

Striking a third time, Cigol's blade was nearly wrenched from his hand as the shadow deflected it downward with its own sword. Before Cigol could recover, the shadow swung upward. Cigol parried with his shield. He had underestimated the shadow's strength; the attack's force pushed Cigol back two steps and nearly broke his shield arm. The shadow launched another savage blow, and Cigol barely blocked it with his own sword. Lunging to the right, Cigol dodged the shadow's third blow and stepped into the sun-

light.

The shadow followed him, stepping to the edge of the shade, and struck again. Cigol, able to see more clearly than in the wood's darkness, dodged the blow and countered with a stroke to the shadow's midsection. The shadow couldn't fully block the attack, and Cigol's sword tip sliced across its midriff. Surprised, Cigol felt the resistance of a solid form. He stepped quickly away from the shade, hoping his opponent would follow and reveal itself in the sunlight. The shadow remained under the trees though. Both paused, bringing a lull to the duel.

Mentally, Cigol measured himself against his opponent. It was stronger, and possibly faster than he. Its attacks followed no pattern or strategy Cigol could detect, but the shadow delivered them with incredible force. It was now injured though, and appeared unwilling to reveal itself in sunlight. The shadow seemed to rely on instinct whereas Cigol fought on strategy. Cigol relived the fight in his mind, searching for any advantage he could use against the shadow.

He noticed the sunlight glimmering on his soiled blade, and an idea came to him. He wiped one side of the sword on his sleeve. Then he held it at an angle, so the sunlight was reflected into the forest. He moved the blade slowly, and the beam travelled through the shadows, illuminating tree trunks and branches. The

shadow dodged the beam. Cigol redirected it, but the shadow stepped deeper into the forest until he could no longer make out its shape.

Realizing the futility of his plan, Cigol lowered his sword. He knew going back would serve no purpose; he must complete his quest to learn what could not be taught. He stepped forward, into the shade and the shadow came to meet him.

Swords crossed again.

Knowledge is a powerful weapon. . .

Cigol struck quickly, probing for a weakness. The shadow deflected every attack and replied with a wild flurry of strokes that seemed without reason. With a brutal sweep from Cigol's right, the shadow's blade pierced his shirt and grazed his back. Cigol winced in pain, but dodged the next blow. Unable to slip within the shadow's guard for his own attack, Cigol broke off the duel again by retreating into the sunlight.

Cigol knew that without any idea of his opponent's weaknesses, he could not defeat it. Their styles were so different that neither could take advantage.

The searing pain from his wound seeped into his thoughts. He tried to ignore it, fearing it would distract him from the fight, but the pain burned within him. Slowly, it flared into anger, and the anger burst into rage. He knew he was

losing his rational control, but the rage swept him away.

He entered the wood for a third time. Again the shadow met him, and again it struck at him. Cigol blocked with his shield and raised his sword. Swinging it down, Cigol released his rage into the stroke. The shadow's blade came up to parry. Cigol's sword shattered it and swept downward, unhindered. The shadow leapt back, barely avoiding the death blow. Cigol recovered and stepped forward, meaning to finish the duel.

The shadow dropped to one knee and raised its empty hands in supplication. "Spare me, lord. I am beaten."

Cigol wavered, then lowered his weapon and stepped back, frightened. Rage demanded that he slay the shadow. Reason opposed it.

"Why did you oppose me?" he questioned.

"Those who fight only in the light cannot survive here. You must learn or be slain."

Cigol watched the shadow for a moment, as it stood, turned, and faded into the deeper darkness of the wood. Rage had won the battle after reason failed him. He feared he couldn't control the power of his rage but he also feared he couldn't survive without it. Cigol thought for a long time before continuing cautiously down the path, deeper into the wood. Q

Beautiful

i had a vision
of a magical tonearm.
it could be detached from
a magical turntable
that was playing a glittering
translucent ice-green record of bowie's
"right" exactly as i hear it
echo secret in my mind:
expanded to an endless mystical
symphony of faith and feeling and
memory, being more
than it is. the sounds
move in fluid twisting patterns
like the trail of a jungle animal
in flight hidden beneath
rainglistening ivy.
(What kind of animal? a frail emerald
serpent whose cool belly glides
over the wet earth? a wild naked
child with torn leaves in his hair
crawling like a tiger through the
underworld of green and water?
--It does not matter, the beauty
of the creature is the motion
it creates, the ripple
of the shining leaves. they tremble
with raindrops, silver and fine.)
There is a waterfall nearby, but out of sight.
A thin vine shudders in the ivy's thick.

by itself the magical tonearm
could be held above newborn
babies, the roots of ancient trees,
saucersful of cream, clocks with
crystal faces, a warm bird's
fluttering heart,
or anything at all--
and play for all the world to hear
their true and glorious music.

Alice Hsu, *The Cross*
Graphite on Illustration Board
15" x 20"

-- Kim Witcher



Grandmother's Cookies

by Kate Sheehan

I can smell the cookies baking contentedly in the oven and wait for the familiar call. But silence alone carries the scent to me and surrounds me in Grandmother's rocking chair. Uncertain, I sit motionless, longing for the welcoming kitchen voice.

At the clock's call, rising from the chair, I leave it rocking behind and pass the portraits in the hall. Around the corner, the floorboard creaks when the brightness of afternoon sunlight on white porcelain greets my gaze. Blue children carrying flowers across the walls and Grandfather's swinging pendulum marking gentle arcs over the cupboard, the pendulum moves slowly, too slowly, slowed in the dazzling light and caressing scent.

Below the clock's arc, Grandmother steps towards me, laughing. Just in time, she tells me with a wink. The custom is our secret. Handing me two glasses of white sweet milk, Grandmother carries the tempt-

ing tray to the porch. Her hair knot, dishevelled in mischievous excitement, suggests a previous sensuality long since replaced by regal playfulness. We sit together, faces towards the sun. As she hands me a cookie, her fragile hands decorated with blue-green protruding veins brush against my own delicate reproductions. I smile into her eyes, but they offer no answer to the frightened questions in my own.

I sit motionless, longing for the welcoming kitchen voice...

Together we sit. Together in the setting sun. Sisters. Together. Silent. She rocks in her chair; I envy the motion and savour the crystals on my tongue. I grin; she does too. And the sparkle of the setting sun fills our eyes.

Grandfather will be home soon, and will smell the cookies. But he will as always silently resign to his exclusion from this

our pleasure. The moment over, Grandmother reaches over and takes my hand into her own, a dove of porcelain white softness. Mine, its twin, melts into hers as the sun becomes the glow of the lake before us and covers us in a flash of orange light. Immediately, it is gone, leaving us in silent dusk.

From the kitchen, the smell continues to dissipate, recounting our deed, now a memory. Grandfather's steps sound on the walk, and Grandmother's hand slips from mine, leaving me suddenly alone in her motionless chair. Through the darkness, the smell of her cookies still surrounds me. And Grandmother remains at my side. *Q*

Kate Sheehan is a senior from Birmingham pursuing a French major and an English minor.

Déja Vu

A shock!

As swift as one expects,

As loud as one could ever want,

Yet welcome

As a wish one could never wish for.

An instant of terror

followed by confusion

followed by longing

ending in extreme joy.

An outstretched limb quivers-

then another,

And then,

comfort and security converge. . .

on Happiness.

-- Shannon Stevens

Shampoo

sunrise after candleflame

on the cliff

leaves from my hair

float

in the sink

swirl

to

the

drain

night on the cliff seems a dream

embers

swirl

-- Heather Dunn

but

open your eyes
 little one
for the world lies in innocence's shadow
 like the dawn that falsely
 tinges softer the colors
 fuzzes distinctions
 at noon the colors and harsh edges wound our sight
see the world with my bleeding eyes
 that have seen

open your ears
 little one
for cries slice the night's calm flesh
 like the maniac's knife that
 swings and swings ever deeper
 and never reasons
 it cuts us all -- the throat is ours --
hear the cries with my aching ears
 that have heard

open your heart
 little one
for sorrow rips or will our peace
 like the stray stone that
 tears apart the tangled threads
 so carefully assembled
 this stone cannot err its aim
know sorrow with my stricken heart
 that has suffered

but
do not despair
 little one
 dear one
for not only ashes and dust mold our lives
 your eyes will see
 your ears will hear
 your heart will suffer
 your soul will weep
I cannot forbid you from the world
 or from your life
nor wish it
 though it strike you down
for my eyes have also seen
 the sea that crashes and recedes
 the smile of a child on Christmas
 the stars sprinkled on black forever
for my ears have also heard
 laughter springing from a friend
 music that sublimates emotion
 the lover's whisper in the night
for my heart has also suffered
 from excitement
 from joy
 from love

these things are yours as well
and your soul will weep
but not from pain

-- David Sutherland

Poets and Artists

Gina Armstrong is an English and German major from Moody, Alabama. Gina is a sophomore.

Collin Asmus is a senior sculpture major from Mobile, Alabama.

Christopher Atkins is a senior from Hoover majoring in biology.

Mark Berte is a junior from Birmingham majoring in English and minoring in philosophy and political science.

William Davis, Jr. is a senior painting major from Northport, Alabama.

Troy Wesley Dickerson is a junior transfer student majoring in music composition. Troy is from Pike Road, Alabama.

Heather Dunn, from Huntsville, is a sophomore English major.

Mary Elizabeth Gover from Huntsville is a transfer student majoring in art.

Stephen Hanson is a sophomore graphic design major from Albertville minoring in English literature.

Judd Harbin is a psychology major from Haleyville.

Dawn Haskew is a Birmingham senior majoring in graphic design and painting. Dawn has recently had work selected for exhibition in a national juried show, "Beached."

Holland Hopson is a freshman from Huntsville. Holland is majoring in music.

Alice Hsu is a junior biology major from Huntsville, Alabama.

William Nicrosi is a senior business major from Montgomery, Alabama.

Irma Persons, from Birmingham, is a senior accounting major.

Shannon Stevens is a sophomore from Huntsville with a strong interest in French culture.

David Sutherland is a sophomore majoring in biology and French. David is from Huntsville.

Michael Witcher is a sophomore from Birmingham pursuing a contracted major of international business, political science, and broadcasting.

Mrs. Caroline M. Smith
A-20

